



Basil Hayben

*Because I don't believe a houseplant really warms a house.



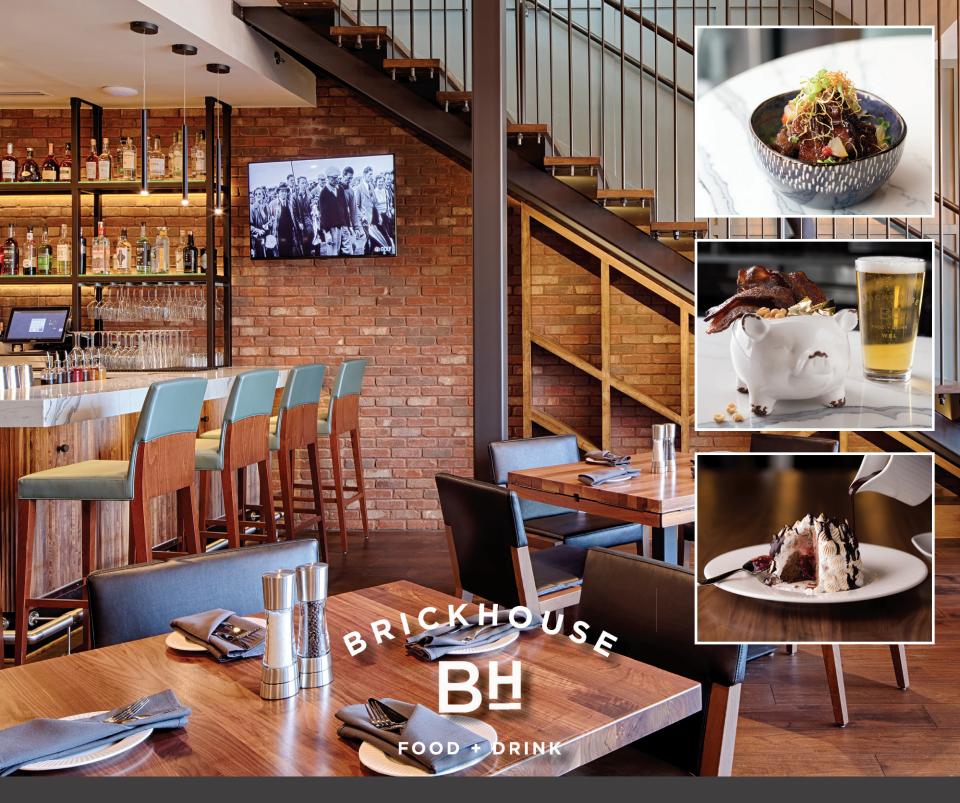
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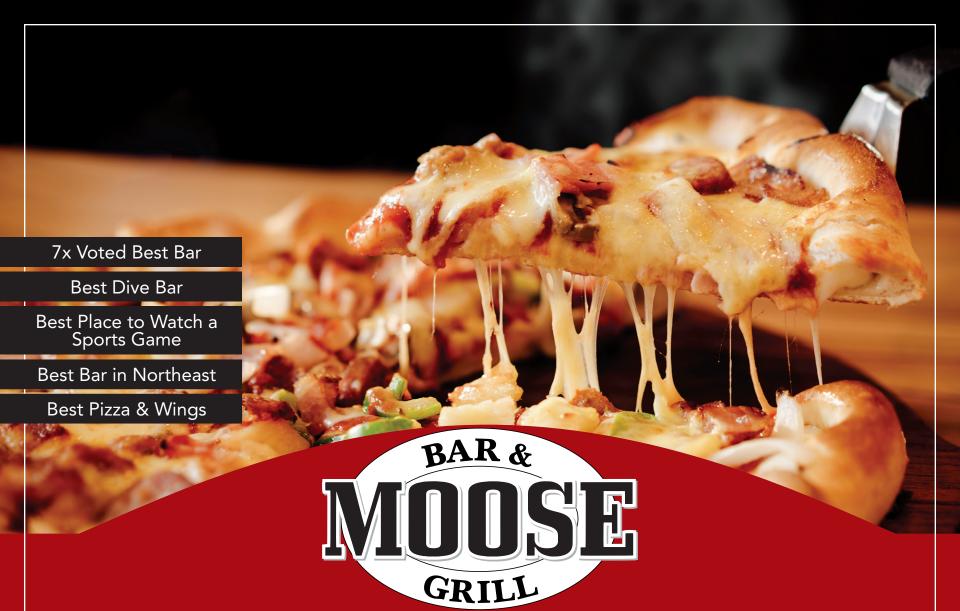
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ON THE COVER



See our restaurant feature on the opposite page.

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Taylor Blocksom, North Loop Galley

By Sarah Brumble

The North Loop Galley, located on the ground floor of the new Nordic building on Washington Avenue, differentiates itself from the roster of local competitors immediately upon crossing its threshold.

Though on paper its square footage seems daunting, the newest food hall on the block feels more like a giant Scandinavian living room. Big windows and ample, communal-style seating pre-set with water carafes lend an air of downtown dining—not high-priced foraging.

Blake Sileo, the Galley's general manager, was eager to show how small, thoughtful details contribute to this.

Customers are given a number to take with them when they order, so they can sit down rather than hover. Food is delivered by the chefs' teams while a Galley-provided staff of apron-clad bussers buzz around clearing plates and maintaining the room. "We also serve on actual china," said Sileo. The vibe is very close to that of a traditional restaurant, but with more movement and a greater selection.

Beyond these touches of service and set decoration, Sileo is most excited about a daily happy hour he described as "aggressive."

All 19 of their taps, plus pours of wine and any of the bar's Princethemed cocktails (designed by the Pittsburgh-based company to highlight products from local spirits and distilleries) are half-price from 4 to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Guests order directly from the 22-seat bar, but may enjoy their beverages anywhere within the space.

Still, most diners are drawn by the promise of new and inventive food that has yet to go brick-and-mortar. In such an environment, and with only four food vendors, each is under immense pressure to deliver. Impossibly, all exceeded expectations.

Thigh Times Birdhouse is a new venture from industry veterans Jared and Jenn Brewington. The couple took their experience running Funky Grits and distilled it into something equally craveable. They've created tastier chicken snacks than ever, with offerings like Tato Tenders (boneless chicken covered in potato chips). "Each Wrib has the meat of two regular chicken wings," says Brewington, explaining their ingenious method for preparing bone-in chicken thighs to look like wings but eat like big, juicy ribs.



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EXPECTATIONS.

Wrecktangle Pizza—the Cities' first Detroit-style specialists-arrived packing heat, literally and figuratively. Their Shredder is outstanding, balancing classics with inventiveness. It comes topped with red sauce, perfect little pepperoni cups, Pecori-

no Romano, pickled ja-EACH IS UNDER lapeno peppers, and a whipped honey spiked with Cry Baby Craig's. Perhaps even more astounding is Wreck-ER. IMPOSSIBLY, tangle's Sotalicious: it's tater tot hot dish in pizza form, topped with a pickle roll-up,

that's approximately 15 times better than it has any right to be.

Next door, Warren Seta and Jess Kelley deliver "fast food done slowly." Ono Hawaiian Plates built a following in the past two years by hosting pop-ups to the delight of huge crowds. At their spot in the Galley, they remain dedicated to serving "good food that's also unpretentious" in the form of the Hawaiian plate lunch. The menu reflects Hawaii's rich cultural and culinary heritage, which lets diners bounce between chicken Katsu (with its Japanese roots), Korean barbecue, Kalua smoky pulled pork, and so much more depending on their mood or level of adventurousness. Included

in the deal are scoops of sticky rice garnished with togarashi and a rich macaroni salad. (And yes, of course they've got spam musubi.)

SoulFu is the creation of chef-owner Timmy Truong, who realized that

> mixing Southeast Asian flavor profiles with Cajun standards equals comfort food from another dimension. Look for starters like kimchi collards, which makes the most of pleasant bitterness and sweet, crunchy

pickling. Pair this with a divine roast duck mac and cheese, or Southern fried chicken served over classic fried rice. Most exciting of all are SoulFu's cheesy grits; they arrive perfectly textured (a rare find!) and turned up a notch from a basic savory side thanks to the addition of Chinese five-spice fried pork belly.

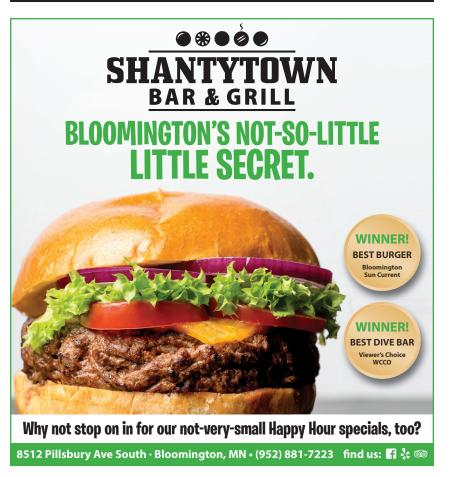
With drink specials to lure the curious, a spread of winning dining options for destination diners, and a staff that supports lingering, this new food hall may become one of the North Loop's better hangs.

North Loop Galley 729 Washington Ave. N., Minneapolis



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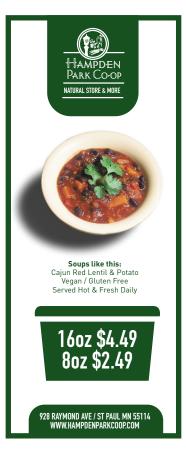
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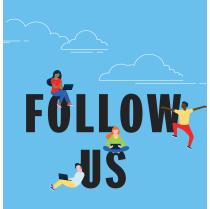
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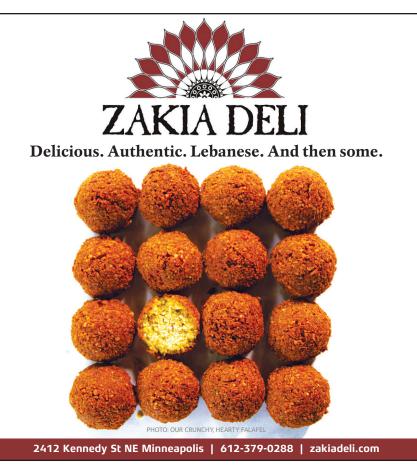


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FOLLOW US (1900)







By Sarah Brumble

Put down that plate. Cast aside your cutlery. It's kamayan time.

South Minneapolis' Apoy has announced a new option for gathering 'round the table with friends and loved ones. Due to popular demand, the Filipino bistro now offers kamayan as an option for guests any night of the week.

This uniquely Filipino dining experience has united communities for generations. Food is served atop a bed of banana leaves on the table's center, and no utensils are used. Apoy's kamayan includes grilled vegetables, meat, and seafood, all supplemented with specialty items and many of the classic dishes the Kingfield gem has become known for.

With such variety, it's no wonder

Apoy's Shawn Nafstad considers their kamayan "a really good way to get a feel for our menu."

Nafstad explained that guests make reservations in advance, and only when the whole party has been seated is the kamayan built before them. Once everything's been set up on the table, servers give a rundown on what's on the spread—including a reassurance that eating with your hands is the whole point. (The dish's name draws from the Tagalog word for "by hand.")

If the idea of one-size-fits-all group dining sounds intimidating, know that you're in the arms of gracious hosts who are ready to proverbially hold your hand (and/or present a warm towel) as necessary.

Apoy is also receptive to special requests and accommodations in planning their kamayans. This includes clearing a spot at their banana-leafed table for vegetarians and pescateri-

ans alongside your favorite meatosaurus, not to mention looking after folks with allergies and dietary restrictions.

To secure a seat at this famed feast o'plenty, first find a friend (minimum party size is two because, see again: community is integral to this tradition), then email the folks at Apov. Kamayan must be arranged via advanced reservation and will be offered for the foreseeable future. For those who may be interested in hosting a kamayan in their own home without cooking the whole shebang, Apoy is also offering a take-out option of their kamayan. Included are "IKEA-style instructions" for building the feast. Email the restaurant for further details.

The rest of Apoy's tasty menu awaits you any ol' time, for days when a more spontaneous treat may be in order.

Apoy 4301 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis



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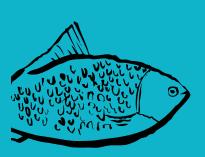
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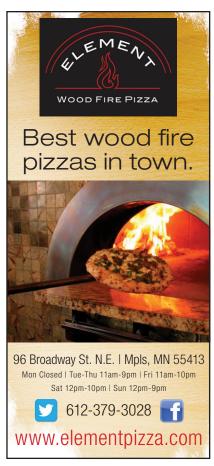
Just west of Minneapolis in the booming suburb of Victoria is an unexpected gem. The sparkling new Winchester & Rye draws you in with its tantalizing combination of chic atmosphere, approachable and affordable food and great cocktails. The menu has broad appeal walleye, burgers, hearty pastas and classic entrees. The beautiful copper oven turns out gorgeous wood-fired pizzas. In the adjoining Whiskey Lounge, savor handmade cocktails featuring local spirits and an impressive list of selections for sipping. You can even rent the party room. Definitely worth the drive.

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By Abeer Syedah

Desi (de-si): sanskrit for "of the land" or "of the country." A loose, subjective term used to describe the people, culture, and production of the South Asian subcontinent and the diaspora.

I recognize that "Desi" and "South Asian" are umbrella terms to define a broad community with a global diaspora that may or may not self-describe as either. In fact, these evoke the legacy of colonialism and imperialism, implying a solidarity we may not (or do not) have. My family may even scoff at the insinuation that we are one community. Nonetheless, in a place like Minnesota, when people are searching for home in food, we may turn to a variety of cuisines and dishes because they're familiar. The flatbreads. The use of a tawa. Savory stews and fragrant rice. Ginger and turmeric.

You're welcome to debate whether or not I was right to include these establishments on this particular list. All I know is whoever you are and whatever the flavors of your home may be, these restaurants will make you happy.

Himalayan Restaurant

2910 E. Lake St., Minneapolis

The most common reason I'm underwhelmed by many South Asian restaurants in this area is a propensity to mute our precious spices, herbs, and aromatics. Theoretically, this appeases more tender, less acclimated palates.

But Lake Street's Himalavan has remained a favorite of the community for good reason. The Nepali establishment is evidence that the boldness and complexity of our food doesn't need to be hidden in order for people of all backgrounds to appreciate and enjoy it. Whether you're South Asian yourself or never even had a samosa, you'll leave Himalayan satisfied. You can get breads, meats, and veggies straight out of the enormous tandoor oven or order fragrant rice and noodle dishes made from scratch. And of course, vegetarians and meat-eaters alike can sample a variety of dishes by ordering sampler platters or going to their lunch/ brunch buffets.

Must try: Palak Paneer. Their version involves spinach and paneer cooked in a luscious spicy tomato cream sauce. Order the scratch-made naan to soak up the curry and really appreciate the depth of the sauce. You'll thank me later.









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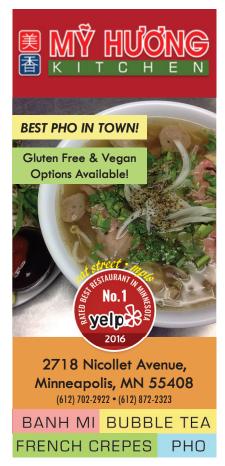


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We all have our beloved neighborhood bars, where the specials lure you in but the quality food keeps you coming; Tracy's Saloon is just that.

Sure, the bar in Minneapolis' Seward neighborhood is serving up excellent traditional American bar fare like burgers and fries. But they also serve prawn noodles in a ginger-coconut sauce and tandoori salmon with coconut rice and pa-

padum. While calling this "bar food" may be unusual in Minnesota, it's beloved around the world. The balance of multiple textures and flavors is exactly what you'll want from happy hour to dinner to late night.

Must try: House Curry and Lemon-Rice. The layered coconut curry comes with your choice of protein served with crispy papadum, tangy lemon-rice, and their special appleraisin chutney. Add a beer and you might just make it through this winter

Namaste India Grill & Brew House 3673 Lexington Ave. N. Ste. L, Arden Hills

When I saw the reviews of this relatively new restaurant in Arden Hills, I was admittedly skeptical. The Twin Cities hasn't yet developed a complex Indian regional cuisine scene, so the options are limited and drive Desi Midwesterners to places like Chicago.

But Namaste vies to fill some of our voids. Street foods—including South Indian favorites—are quality and layered with the thoughtfulness this cuisine demands. The chutneys, achars, and flatbreads are house-made. Every curry and korma I've tried so far has not shied away from our precious herbs and spices. First I was stoked to see things like Chicken 65, vada

pay, dosas, dahi puri, and chaat on the menu, then euphoric when they were all genuinely delicious and reminiscent of the quality offered in Chicago, Texas, Toronto, etc.

Must try: Tikka/Tandoori dishes

DESI (DE-SI):

SANSKRIT FOR

"OF THE LAND"

OR "OF THE

COUNTRY."

with naan. A quality tandoori tikka (skewered meats/veggies/cheeses cooked in a tandoor oven) is hard to come by in Minnesota, as is quality naan. Call your aunties, because this place has both.

Harry Singh's Original Caribbean Restaurant

2653 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis

If you think ketchup is spicy, this place is not for you. Everyone else, if you haven't been to Harry Singhs—the Trinidadian treasure of Eat Street—read on.

Harry Singh's is affordable. It's spicy. It's comforting. You may recognize Harry Singh's from their State Fair stand in the food building (which I visit first thing on the first day, every year.) Or perhaps you've heard of them because they're often mentioned in discussions about where to get something properly spicy in Minnesota. Namesake and owner Harry Singh rolls out fresh rotis, curries, jerk chicken, patties, and more, all while a house pepper sauce has you sweating and those endorphins flowing. And you can wash it all down with Caribbean punch or some ginger beer.

Must try: the Doubles. This popular Trinidadian dish traces back to the Chola Bhaturas of India, and is a set of little fried breads served with a spicy and layered chickpea curry. Harry Singh's doubles are so craveable because they're salty, spicy, crispy, and airy pillows of joy.

See more at citypages.com





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By Sarah Brumble

You know what we never get sick of around here? A cup of good coffee and some demonstrated wisdom. Luckilv. True Stone Coffee Roasters is picking up what we're putting down, if you know what we mean.

As of late January, the longtime workhorse of the local restaurant

and cafe scene has finally opened its first public-facing retail location in Lowertown St. Paul's former Salty Tart space.

Founded in 2003, the company has spent over a decade serving the industry itself, mostly from behind the scenes. Their full-scale roastery has been in operation since 2007, and they've been certifying brewers and

baristas from around the country after launching a Premier Training Campus for the Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) in 2017.

"This is an opportunity to show off our own unique vision of what a cafe can achieve in terms of quality, atmosphere, and service," says Tyler Liedman, True Stone's director of operations.

Their coffee bar will serve precisely caffeinated concoctions from a spankin' new Slayer LPX espresso machine, with freshroasted beans whirred to perfection from Mahlkonia grinders. For those less inclined to imbibe bean water, they're stocking the finest Tea Source selections featuring Easternand Western-style service options from Tea Source.

In an utterly heartwarming nod to

past partnerships and good things gone, True Stone is keeping the tradition of the Salty Tart alive by retaining one of their former cooks to carry on the majority of the former's

THE COMPANY

HAS SPENT

OVER A DECADE

SERVING THE IN-

DUSTRY ITSELF.

brunch menu. (True Stone once worked as the Salty Tart's roast-Accompanying these brunch offerings will be pastries from newcomer Rachel Anderson of Vikings and Goddesses-known for incredible pies and sundry other delights,

plus breads from Chris Sarles' Lowertown Bakehouse.

If it sounds like True Stone's cafe could be a hearty blend of history and freshness, wrapped into one smooth and intriguing package... well, that might just be True Stone's years of experience showing.

True Stone Coffee Roasters 289 E. Fifth St., St. Paul

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By JD Hovland

With nearly half a month spent out of the country—a week in Poland for work, an overnight road trip through Germany to Amsterdam due to some heavy fog and canceled flights in Krakow, a few days in London, and too few in Prague-that made for a lot of soup, contributing to a total of 44 bowls consumed in a month's time. Even with all that travel, I'm

limiting my recommendations to the best locally available, with an added shout out to a Polish standout, in case you're headed to a place in Wisconsin that serves a variation.

Curry Beef Brisket Noodle Soup

So Good Asian-230 S. Sixth St., Minneapolis

This skyway spot on the north side of the U.S. Bank Building serves up a variety of soups, including this

number. It's automatically approachable due to familiar flavors of beef stew with a thinner broth, but adds an ample amount of chewy noodles into the mix. It was deceptively delightful.

Seafood Bichi

Sonora Grill -3300 E. Lake St., Minneapolis

I needed some spice after my European sojourn and stumbled upon this offering from Sonora the day I got back. Loaded with seafood like the name implies-including shrimp, scallops, and crab meat-it reminded me of a twist on a cioppino. The avocado's fattiness paired really well with the heat from the broth and the citrus's bright acidity.

Karamiso "Magma" Ramen

Ramen Kazama-3400 Nicollet Ave. S. and 1510 Como Ave. SE, Minneapolis

Sometimes it's hard to figure out where cravings come from, but the desire for this bowl is easily traced

to photos from local chef Doug Flicker's travels through Japan. Spicy, but not overly so, the Karamiso "Magma" Ramen is packed with flavor, and using ground pork allows for a more even flavor distribution than would sliced meat, which works really well with the miso-based broth.

Potato Leek Soup

The Kenwood Restaurant-2115 W. 21st St., Minneapolis

A man cannot live on spice alonesometimes he needs brunch, or something like that? As a fan of soup and a fan of brunch, I'm really a fan when they coexist. Not too many brunch menus in town boast a soup, but the few that do really shine, including this Potato Leek with Benton's Bacon. It's smooth, but with that slightly grippy starchiness from the pureed potato, and goes great with the Kenwood's burger and a single pancake.

See more at citypages.com













By Stacy Brooks

When Aaron Switz and Mikael Asp, owners of Agra Culture and SotaRol, purchased YUMI Japanese Restaurant & Bar in Excelsior from its longtime owner and founder in 2018. they didn't make a lot of changes.

"We didn't subtract from the menu." savs Anne Debeau-Melting, COO of the ownership group. "We've been adding and refining."

But while many things might be staying the same in Excelsior, there

has been one major shift for the restaurant: YUMI recently opened a second location in St. Paul's Cathedral Hill neighborhood.

The former Fabulous Fern's space in the historic Blair Arcade has

been transformed into something way more Zen, with a soothing gray and blue color palette, bonsai trees. and Japanese scrolls. A few tables are topped with paper umbrellas for a pop of color and whimsy, and a wave mural based on Hokusai's famous woodblock print adorns the wall behind the sushi bar.

As far as the food menu, expect the same as that of the Excelsion location, featuring cooked appetizers like a delightfully sinus-clearing rock shrimp tempura, plus teriyaki and fried rice dishes, udon noodle soup, and an extensive sushi selection. (Pro tip: The gargantuan YUMI rolls are at least double the size of a standard sushi roll—don't even trv to eat more than one.)

Many of the rolls are beloved staples from YUMI's 21-years-andcounting Excelsior run, such as the Marianne roll made with cooked

> snow crab and shrimp tempura; it's named for a regular customer who requested something without raw fish. Other menu items are more recent additions. like a snappy appetizer of spicy tuna served atop crisp mounds of seasoned rice resem-

bling nigiri.

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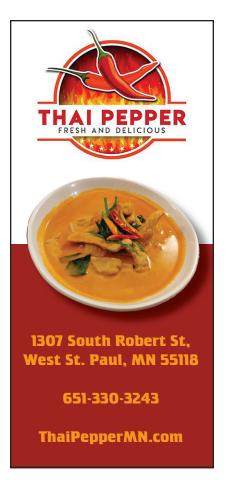
In lieu of traditional sushi bar seating, high-top tables are nestled alongside the bar. Watching the chefs at work is a treat—sushi platters feature flourishes like daikon radish rosettes, cranes fashioned from sliced cucumbers, and tiny wasabi monsters with octopus suck**DAILY 2-4-1's** 11:00 TO 6:00PM

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ers for eyes (trust us, it's adorable). The most notable difference from the original Excelsior restaurant is the bar program in St. Paul. Thanks to a larger bar space, there's an impressive lineup of Japanese spiritsnearly two dozen whiskeys, plus gin, vodka, and sake—as well as 16 taps and a wine list.

YUMI's cocktail menu features Japanese-inspired takes on the classics, like the Tokyo 75 made with Japanese gin and sparkling sake. You Only Live Twice is a lovely balance of gin, vodka, sake, elderflower, and yuzu. (Special thanks to our bartender for explaining the double Bond reference: You Only Live Twice is the sole Bond movie filmed in Japan, and the drink itself is a riff on the Vesper, a cocktail invented by Bond author Ian Fleming.)

"We're excited about being in this neighborhood," says Debeau-Melting, noting that the warm reception from Cathedral Hill residents is similar to the loyal following the restau-

rant has enjoyed in Excelsior. "This neighborhood arrives for a community restaurant—people are looking for an inviting environment."

Speaking of an inviting environment, a 40-seat patio is in the works for spring. We'll raise a YUMI old fashioned (made with Japanese whiskey, of course) to that.

YUMI St. Paul officially opened to the public on February 3. Happy hour and dinner are offered daily.

YUMI Japanese Restaurant & Bar 400 Selby Ave., St. Paul



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Sarah Brumble

By Sarah Brumble

South Minneapolis has a bright, quirky new coffee shop in its midst. And its character is exactly what the neighborhood was missing. Duck Duck Coffee recently sprung up at 38th Street and Cedar Avenue.

Duck Duck's interior is bright and crisp, with clean lines and lots of light that pours through its huge front windows. Multi-tiered white pans full of plants cascade from the ceiling, and bare bulbs dangle between hand-cut snowflakes made of printer paper. At the back, a vintage Arkanoid video game console beckons.

Also, there are monsters. Huge, blue monsters. With three eyes each. Worming around each other on the western wall. Those big meanies are friendly enough to be fun, but menacing enough to keep the place from being too cute—kinda like spicing up Ikea with a welcome hallucination.

Duck Duck's mastermind is Kat Naden. As a veteran of the original Muddy Waters at 24th and Lyndale, Naden understands that character is essential to creating a lasting salon in these modern times.

Her shop's selection of coffee keeps it simple yet stellar, with offerings like traditional Cubanos pulled tiny and sweet, or fluffy cappuccinos,

both served with animal crackers.

The food menu satiates without over-complicating matters, running the gamut from a bakery case loaded with house-made goods, sandwiches smothered in spinach dip or smoked turkey, to a "Sure-Cute-Ery" plate made of carrot sticks with ranch, goldfish crackers, and a fruit snack for the wee ones (or kids at heart).

As the new kid in the caffeinated thunderdome, Duck Duck holds a variety of events to welcome people to its orbit. Naden has created a monthly book club, designed to get participants "thinking/talking/whatever," whether through "fiction, nonfiction, books about death, books that might be offensive or weird to some." (Interested in joining? A shop copy will always be available.) Naden says she hopes to eventually "do some weird form of music and art and comedy and all that good stuff."

Duck Duck strikes a great balance in what you'd want from a coffee shop: warm and welcoming enough that everyone has a reason to feel at home and expressive, yet minimal enough in setting that you can actually think-unlike in one's actual home, where reality can close in a little too fast, and the coffee runs out.

Duck Duck Coffee 1830 E. 38th St., Minneapolis













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